(a) whether Government are willing to consider the use of production and broadcasting facility of DD and AIR by private companies to help revive both DD and AIR;

(b) if so, whether Government have received any proposals from the private companies on these lines;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, whether Government have plans to invite proposals in the near future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) to (d) Prasar Bharati has informed that Doordarshan and AIR lend their infrastructural facilities to private producers, after meeting their in-house production requirements, as per the prescribed rate card. This is a continuous process and depends of the requirements of each channel and station of DD/AIR, where such proposals are received. No centralized records are maintained on the hiring out of the production facilities.

Import of set top boxes

†2792. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM :

SHRI LAJPAT RAI :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether set top boxes are being imported;

(b) if so, who are the importers and suppliers of the boxes;

(c) the number of boxes already imported and at what rate; and

(d) the details, company-wise, brand-wise and price wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) As per data furnished by the Customs and Cental Excise authorities, 1,07,882 STBs have been imported by various Multi-System Operators/Cable Operators, as on 31.7.2003. According to data given by Multi System Operators (MSOs), orders for more STBs have been placed and these are expected to arrive in a phased manner. The cost of the box

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

ranges between Rs.2500/- and Rs.3000/- The MSOs and the Cable Operators etc. have come out with different schemes for making the STBs available to the subscribers i.e. through instalment/hire-purchase/ outright purchase, loan schemes, etc. or on a refundable deposit plus nominal daily rental charges.

Government is not importing these boxes and as per reports of the MSOs importing them, they are coming from South Korea, China, etc.

Licence fee for private FM radio stations

2793. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have constituted a task froce to look into the issue of licence fee for private FM radio stations;

(b) if so, who would be the Chairman of this task force;

(c) how many members have been appointed;

(d) what would be its main functions; and

(e) whether any time has been fixed for the task force to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD): (a) By an order dated 24.07.2003 a committee has been constituted to make recommendations for private FM Radio Broadcasting for Phase-II.

(b) Dr. Amit Mitra, Secretary General, FICCI has been appointed as the chair person of the committee.

(c) It has 10 members (including Chairperson).

(d) the terms of references *inter alia* include determining a transparent and effective bidding/auction process to be adopted for allotment of frequencies, studying the desirability and legal implications of making modifications in licencing regime of Phase-I licences, etc. Details are available on the Ministry's web site www.mib.nic.in

(e) The Committee has been asked to submit its report by 30th September, 2003.